

On behalf of my family, I'd like to welcome all of you who have joined us today to celebrate the life of my Father, Manny.

Over the last week I've thought a lot about who he was and how I could honor him with my words. My father was a simple guy. Two words come to my mind that fully envelop the man that he was. Proud and passionate.

Anyone that knew him knew his passion- if he had a feeling or an opinion he let it be known. It's a character trait I am certain I inherited- ask anyone.

He was incredibly proud of being from Milford and of his country. He represented that by serving in Vietnam and wearing his fully decorated hat everyday, everywhere, letting his pride be on display. He was thrilled when Mark Jr followed in his legacy of military service and joined the Air Force.

My childhood memories are overwhelmed with his other life's passion- his love of cooking. He got overwhelmed with excitement at any opportunity to cook and entertain. In fact, I don't remember eating a single apple that was NOT carved into a bird or a summertime tomato salad we had taken a trip to Kelly's farm for that wasn't carved into a rose.

He loved all things local and the running joke was his love of Spag's would get him out of town but he had to pack a lunch due to the drive.

Summer was his favorite. Those trips to Kelly's farm, long days on the lake or down the Cape on my Godfather's boat were what made his weekends.

His favorite was the 6 am wake up to trek to Horseneck Beach, his grill and charcoal in tow, to get there first thing and stay in the water all day and watch dusk settle on the sand as the last of the charcoal cooled off from the day. I never could understand why people would leave the beach while the sun was still out- it just seemed normal to drive home in the dark. He loved the sunshine and the water- it was some of the happiest moments I remember seeing him.

I know that as we have gone through this last week and piecing together a memorial to showcase him through pictures, as you may have seen last night, that my cousin Shelia so lovingly put together, to pay a true homage to his life's legacy we were overwhelmed by his photo collection. He loved his family and his friends. Most of the photos he was actually in- he had his back to the camera and was slaving away doing what he loved- cooking for the party. Otherwise, he was the photographer filling his lens with those moments between friends, the children, the chaos of the day's festivities, the sights from his travels overseas and across the country, to simple moments that were his daily life.

My Dad unfortunately came just shy of his 67th birthday yesterday. A life gone too soon and way too young. So as we celebrate him today, on behalf of all who loved him I'd like to express that I hope my wish for you this year came true. That you have finally been set free of your pain and are at peace, hopefully sitting on the sand somewhere warm and enjoying the view.

We love you. May you rest in eternal peace.